

(e) Cultivation.

Area under cereal cultivation and its assessment.

114. The area under cereal crops and the amount realized by assessment in each division are given in the following statement:—

| Division. | AREA UNDER CULTIVATION. | | | | AMOUNT REALIZED BY ASSESSMENT. | | | |
|------------------|-------------------------|----------|----------|----------|--------------------------------|----------|----------|----------|
| | Kharif. | | Rabi. | | Kharif. | | Rabi. | |
| | 1893-94. | 1894-95. | 1893-94. | 1894-95. | 1893-94. | 1894-95. | 1893-94. | 1894-95. |
| | Acres. | Acres. | Acres. | Acres. | Rs. | Rs. | Rs. | Rs. |
| Sukkur | 513 | 393 | 1,953 | 2,478 | 1,596 | 980 | 8,004 | 9,074 |
| Naushahro... .. | 453 | 154 | 2,290 | 2,054 | 1,305 | 496 | 7,178 | 6,235 |
| Hyderabad | 105 | 70 | 1,022 | 200 | 166 | 243 | 651 | 871 |
| Jerruck | 219 | 72 | 59 | 61 | 672 | 100 | 150 | 128 |
| Total | 1,290 | 689 | 5,324 | 4,793 | 3,739 | 1,819 | 15,983 | 16,308 |

115. It will be seen that the area under cultivation has been greatly reduced in accordance with the orders issued by the Commissioner in Sind. The figures would have been still lower had it not been for the fact that 716 acres in the Thul Reserves, the disforestation of which had been agreed upon, were let out for cultivation during the year under report.

116. A great deal of misapprehension exists outside the department as to the use it makes of the power to grant land for cultivation within forest limits, so much so that even in high quarters the continuance of the practice, which is of long standing, is not viewed with favour. Unfortunately, this misconception is due to the fact that for some years past persons who had no interest whatever in the cultivation of the soil were able to secure land in the forests, and whenever claims were made to acquire new accretions thrown up by the river, they were, in view of the impression that had gained ground that the department would not make any legitimate use of it, resisted, and it was with the greatest trouble that such lands ultimately became Reserved Forests. It need not be said that this abuse of the practice has been put an end to, and grants are now confined to zamindars and *bonâ fide* tillers of the soil living in the vicinity of the forests, who render valuable and material assistance to the Forest Department in cultural operations, suppressing fires, clearing boundary-paths and compartment lines, erecting and repairing boundary-marks, providing labour for other works of improvement, &c. Another reform introduced in this connection is that, in forests which receive a copious supply of water and which are capable of being naturally reproduced, no cereal crops are to be raised on any pretence whatever, and that only when it is impracticable to reclothe the denuded areas is the aid of the cultivator to be sought in order that expenditure on ploughing or working up the soil, irrigating the area, if it does not come within the direct influence of the floods, &c., may be reduced to a minimum. The case is different on new formations or *katchas*. Until the deposits of successive seasons raise them to a sufficiently high level to enable a forest of valuable species to establish itself, the cultivation of the soil is a work of improvement, as it prevents the soil from deteriorating and helps in suppressing the dense rank growth which invades such lands almost as soon as they are thrown up.

III.—Free grants of Forest Produce.

Free grants.

117. The following statement shows the value of the free grants of timber made during the last two years:—

| Division. | | | 1893-94. | 1894-95. |
|-----------|-----|-----|----------|----------|
| | | | Rs. | Rs. |
| Sukkur | ... | ... | 365 | 418 |
| Naushahro | ... | ... | 38 | 629 |
| Hyderabad | ... | ... | 180 | 93 |
| Jerruck | ... | ... | 121 | 22 |
| Total | | | 704 | 1,162 |

118. Applications for free grants are very seldom refused, and the people are allowed to enjoy the bounty of Government to the fullest extent possible so long as they come forward to ask for it. It has been seriously proposed to allow villagers residing in the vicinity of the forests to help themselves with small timber for their agricultural as well as domestic wants, that is to say, without any "troublesome preliminaries," as they are called. It is true that a large quantity of dead wood lies rotting on the ground in some forests which are heavily flooded, and at first sight it would appear that no harm would be done, but on the contrary the people would be willing to work harmoniously with the Department, if they are allowed to have free access to the forests. In Sind, however, such a procedure would not answer, simply because the forest subordinates and the villagers, as a rule, work rather too well together against the interests of the State so long as their own are not at stake. It is admitted that more liberality should be shown, and the Department is ready to let the ryots have as many thorns as they want as well as all the timber they require for agricultural and other purposes, but it is forgotten that beggars cannot be choosers, and if these small privileges are not exercised under proper supervision, they are likely to be abused to the detriment of the forests.

IV.—Produce removed by right-holders and under privileges.

119. Only rights of way and water exist in the Sind forests. The sub-joined statement shows the number of cattle that were allowed to graze free and the value of the grazing enjoyed by them compared with the results of the previous year :—

| Division. | No. of cattle. | | Value of grazing. | |
|---------------|----------------|----------|-------------------|----------|
| | 1893-94. | 1894-95. | 1893-94. | 1894-95. |
| Sukkur ... | 7,875 | 10,435 | 9,782 | 12,883 |
| Naushahro ... | 6,895 | 5,226 | 1,503 | 1,204 |
| Hyderabad ... | ... | ... | ... | ... |
| Jerruck ... | 79 | 54 | 101 | 40 |
| Total ... | 14,849 | 15,715 | 11,386 | 14,127 |

V.—Summary of Produce removed from Forests.

Summary of produce. 120. The following is a summary of produce removed from the forests :—

| Description of material. | | | | Number or quantity. |
|--------------------------|-----|-----|----------|---------------------|
| Timber ... | ... | ... | C. ft. | 317,692 |
| Firewood and charcoal | ... | ... | " | 16,739,439 |
| Babul seed | ... | ... | Mds. | 10 |
| Munj reed | ... | ... | Bundles. | 819 |
| Sar reed | ... | ... | Do. | 402 |
| Kanh grass | ... | ... | Do. | 2,073 |
| Dabh grass | ... | ... | Do. | 2,116 |
| Jhau brushwood | ... | ... | Do. | 2,394 |
| Babul bark | ... | ... | Mds. | 1,122 |
| Tooth brushes | ... | ... | Bundles. | 730 |